

Getting Hitched Musings

by Michael Cooke

I first got hitched when, with my thumb stuck in the air, I waved it in front of passing vehicles to get lifts to all parts of the UK. Hitchhiking was an honourable activity in those days. Often accompanied by sleeping in barns or Youth Hostels.

When Pat and I got hitched we were living in the UK and our wedding was in Scotland. It was a traditional affair with a mixture of formal attire including a lot of kilts worn by the men. After the service, we left for the reception. In a Rolls Royce, of course.

For the photographs in the grounds of Lomond Castle Hotel, overlooking the Loch, the photographer, to combat the high wind nailed Pat's wedding train to the ground with his sgian dubh pulled from his stocking top. Practical Scots.

Following the reception, we anticipated leaving in a car trailing tin cans and wearing the traditional 'Just Married' sign. We weren't disappointed. Not wanting to drive across Scotland like that we had a ruse. We left in Pat's Mum's car, a 2-litre 6-cylinder Triumph Vitesse, drove around to the stables and transferred into our unmolested MG Midget and left Mum to look after her car.

That Vitesse was eventually sold to a friend of ours, as a collector car, and is still driving the roads of the UK. Registration KUS 444E. Check Google.

Years later, Mum, a 'little old lady who used her car for shopping and church on Sunday' (wink, wink) came home with an MGB GT with full Stage 2 Racing upgrade. Some shopping basket!

One of our hobbies involved me racing dinghies and when we got our own, I had to get our current LBC hitched up. An MG 1300 CVK 21J - and still being driven. Again, check Google.

Trailer, lights and sundry equipment enabled us to sail at home on the North Sea and at the cottage on the Irish Sea. When we left the UK, the trailer and boat went to a university friend and colleague who drove a 1959 Armstrong Siddeley Star Sapphire (a Large British Car).

Unwilling to besmirch the 'venerable old lady', he had a hitch installed on his Ford Capri LBC to do the towing. He eventually emigrated to Pensacola, FL and got hitches installed on his cars for several new boats before his last, a keelboat, got wiped out in a hurricane. Though written off by insurance it is still sailing in Washington State. How's the insurance on your LBC? Don Barr seems to have this option figured out. Ask him.

Out of the Nepean Sailing Club we car-topped our dinghy all over North America until buying a 28ft keelboat. The seller had a hitch on his Chevy Suburban (by no means an LBC!) with which he towed the boat to Georgian Bay for long summer holidays. He got 2 foot-itis resulting in a new bigger boat and continued to do the same with this one. He then unhitched himself from BNR and went seriously into sailing. He opened up a sailboat charter company in the Caribbean based on the Tall-Ship "The Lord Sheffield". This too got wiped out in a hurricane. He moved house to the Azores to avoid hurricane season, and commutes between there and his business in the Caribbean on his personal sailboat. No tow hitch required, but willing to take hitch hikers as crew if they could tie a clove hitch.

Much as I often thought it would be useful, we didn't have hitches on our Canadian cars until we got the present LBC. It became necessary to move the uncertified MGB from Montreal to Ottawa on its journey home. The crunch came later when I did silly things, like shorting the starter on a brake line and causing a pin-hole leak. Bob Corral came to the rescue with the loan of his car dolly after I had installed a hitch on my Honda CRV. Now that I have it of course it doesn't get used. Such is life.

Hitch me up Scotty.

Michael



sgian dubh



Lomond Castle Hotel